

IN THE CLAIMS

*The status of the claims as presently amended is as follows:*

1. (*Currently Amended*) A system for managing an information service which handles contribution and distribution of digital contents and presentation of advertising messages to users of the information service via a plurality of user terminals including first and second user terminals over a computer network, the system comprising:

a first database containing advertising messages provided from advertisers that subscribe to the information service with payment of advertisement fees;

a second database containing a plurality of digital contents which are subject to legal protection on behalf of content proprietors;

a-delivering delivering section that delivers the advertising messages over the computer network to the users via the plurality of user terminals;

a receiving section that receives a digital content from one of the user via the first user terminal together with status information indicating that the received digital content is subject to the legal protection and identifying a content proprietor of the received digital content, which is created as a secondary work by the one user, who is different from the identified content proprietor, wherein the secondary work by the one user is a modified version of a digital content provided by the content proprietor;

a registering section that registers the received digital content into the second database together with the status information;

another receiving section that receives a request for delivery of the registered digital content from the second user terminal;

another delivering section that delivers the registered digital content to another of the user via the second user terminal when receiving the request from the another user over the computer network; and

an allocating section that allocates at least a part of the advertisement fees collected from the subscribing advertisers to the content proprietor of the registered digital content identified in the status information.

2. (*Previously Presented*) The system according to claim 1, wherein the second database contains protected digital contents subject to legal protection and non-protected digital contents not subject to legal protection, such that the allocating section allocates the collected

advertisement fees to the proprietors only when the protected digital contents are delivered to the users via the user terminals.

3. (*Previously Presented*) The system according to claim 1, wherein the allocating section allocates the collected advertisement fees only if the registered digital content is delivered under the legal protection as indicated by the status information.

4. (*Previously Presented*) The system according to claim 1, wherein the second database contains a multiple of digital contents subject to legal protection on behalf of the same proprietor, such that the allocating section allocates a part of the collected advertisement fees to the same proprietor when any of the multiple of the digital contents is delivered to the users via the user terminals.

5. (*Currently Amended*) A method of managing an information service which handles contribution and distribution of digital contents and presentation of advertising messages to users of the information service via a plurality of user terminals including first and second user terminals over a computer network, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a first database containing advertising messages provided from advertisers that subscribe to the information service with payment of advertisement fees;

providing a second database containing a plurality of digital contents which are subject to legal protection on behalf of content proprietors;

delivering the advertising messages over the computer network to the users via the plurality of the user terminals;

receiving a digital content from one of the users via the first user terminal together with status information indicating that the received digital content is subject to the legal protection and identifying a content proprietor of the received digital content, which is created as a secondary work by the one user, who is different from the identified content proprietor, wherein the secondary work by the one user is a modified version of a digital content provided by the content proprietor;

registering the received digital content into the second database together with the status information;

receiving a request for delivery of the registered digital content from the second user terminal;

delivering the registered digital content to another of the users via the second user terminal when receiving the request from the another user over the computer network; and

allocating at least a part of the advertisement fees collected from the subscribing advertisers to the content proprietor of the registered digital content identified in the status information.

6. (*Previously Presented*) The method according to claim 5, wherein the second database contains protected digital contents subject to legal protection and non-protected digital contents not subject to legal protection, such that the allocating of the collected advertisement fees to the proprietors is effected only when the protected digital contents are delivered to the users via the user terminals.

7. (*Previously Presented*) The method according to claim 5, wherein the allocating of the collected advertisement fees is effected only if the registered digital content is delivered under the legal protection as indicated by the status information.

8. (*Previously Presented*) The method according to claim 5, wherein the second database contains a multiple of digital contents subject to legal protection on behalf of the same proprietor, such that a part of the collected advertisement fees is allocated to the same proprietor when any of the multiple of the digital contents is delivered to the users via the user terminals.

9. (*Currently Amended*) A machine readable medium for use in a server having a CPU and managing an information service which handles contribution and distribution of digital contents and presentation of advertising messages to users of the information service via a plurality of user terminals including first and second user terminals over a computer network, the medium containing program instructions executable by the CPU for causing the server to perform a method comprising the steps of:

managing a first database containing advertising messages provided from advertisers that subscribe to the information service with payment of advertisement fees;

managing a second database containing a plurality of digital contents which are subject to legal protection on behalf of content proprietors;

delivering the advertising messages over the computer network to the users via the plurality of the user terminals;

receiving a digital content from one of users via the first user terminal together with status information indicating that the received digital content is subject to the legal protection and identifying a content proprietor of the received digital content, which is created as a secondary work by the one user, who is different from the identified content proprietor, wherein the secondary work by the one user is a modified version of a digital content provided by the content proprietor;

registering the received digital content into the second database together with the status information;

receiving a request for delivery of the registered digital content from the second user terminal;

delivering the registered digital content to another of the users via the second user terminal when receiving the request from the another user over the computer network; and

allocating at least a part of the advertisement fees collected from the subscribing advertisers to the content proprietor of the registered digital content identified in the status information.

10. (*Previously Presented*) The machine readable medium according to claim 9, wherein the second database contains protected digital contents subject to legal protection and non-protected digital contents not subject to legal protection, such that the allocating of the collected advertisement fees to the proprietors is effected only when the protected digital contents are delivered to the users via the user terminals.

11. (*Previously Presented*) The machine readable medium according to claim 9, wherein the allocating of the collected advertisement fees is effected only if the registered digital content is delivered under the legal protection as indicated by the status information.

12. (*Previously Presented*) The machine readable medium according to claim 9, wherein the second database contains a multiple of digital contents subject to legal protection on behalf of the same proprietor, such that a part of the collected advertisement fees is allocated to the same proprietor when any of the multiple of the digital contents is delivered to the users via the user terminals.

13. (*Currently Amended*) A computer-readable storage device storing a computer program executable by a server for managing an information service which handles contribution and distribution of digital contents and presentation of advertising messages to users of the information service via a plurality of user terminals including first and second user terminals over a computer network, the computer program comprising instructions for:

managing a first database containing advertising messages provided from advertisers that subscribe to the information service with payment of advertisement fees;

managing a second database containing a plurality of digital contents which are subject to legal protection on behalf of content proprietors;

delivering the advertising messages over the computer network to the users via the plurality of user terminals;

receiving a digital content from one of the users via the first user terminal together with status information indicating that the received digital content is subject to the legal protection and identifying a content proprietor of the received digital content, which is created as a secondary work by the one user, who is different from the identified content proprietor, wherein the secondary work by the one user is a modified version of a digital content provided by the content proprietor;

registering the received digital content into the second database together with the status information;

receiving a request for delivery of the registered digital content from the second user terminal;

delivering the registered digital content to another of the users via the second user terminal when receiving the request from the another user over the computer network; and

allocating at least a part of the advertisement fees collected from the subscribing advertisers to the content proprietor of the registered digital content identified in the status information.

14. (*Previously Presented*) The computer-readable storage device according to claim 13, wherein the second database contains protected digital contents subject to legal protection and non-protected digital contents not subject to legal protection, such that the allocating of the collected advertisement fees to the proprietors is effected only when the protected digital contents are delivered to the users via the user terminals.

15. (*Previously Presented*) The computer-readable storage device according to claim 13, wherein the allocating of the collected advertisement fees is effected only if the registered digital content is delivered under the legal protection as indicated by the status information.
16. (*Previously Presented*) The computer-readable storage device according to claim 13, wherein the second database contains a multiple of digital contents subject to legal protection on behalf of the same proprietor, such that a part of the collected advertisement fees is allocated to the same proprietor when any of the multiple of the digital contents is delivered to the users via the user terminals.
17. (*New*) The system according to claim 1, wherein the digital content is music.
18. (*New*) The system according to claim 5, wherein the digital content is music.
19. (*New*) The system according to claim 9, wherein the digital content is music.
20. (*New*) The system according to claim 13, wherein the digital content is music.